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DISCOVERY IN THE URBAN SPRAWL.

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FOR A CULTURAL ENRICHMENT PROJECT ("DISCOVERY") IN A DISADVANTAGED PHILADELPIA HIGH SCHOOL, ATTENDANCE AT MUSIC, ART, AND THEATER EVENTS EARNED POINTS TOWARD A CERTIFICATE. THE STUDENTS ELECTED THE EVENTS FROM A PREPARED LIST OF ACTIVITIES, WHICH OFTEN WERE MADE PART OF THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND THE SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES. AS WELL AS OFFERING ENRICHMENT, THE PROJECT ENCOURAGED INTEREST IN FINANCIAL PLANNING (TO PAY FOR THE TICKETS) AND IN STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR AND DRESS. THIS ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED IN "THE CLEARING HOUSE," VOLUME 40, NUMBER 7, MARCH 1966. (NH)

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Discovery in the Urban Sprawl

By LEON HYMOVITZ

THE BOYS in Philadelphia's Thomas A. Edison High School have all the problems of other high school students—and then some. It is no secret that many of them lead lives that are culturally circumscribed and devoid of any contact with the artistic treasures that abound in our world.

Coming, as they do in many instances, from homes in which there is often little regard for achieving, it is small wonder that many of the boys hold the notion that literature, art, music, and theater are reserved for more fortunate people.

Through a special education improvement appropriation granted by the Board of Education, Edison High has been engaged in an exciting school-wide motivation program entitled Discovery. One of the high priority tasks of the project is to develop the cultural tastes and appreciations of all the boys. In addition to special assembly programs and field trips, a carefully balanced Calendar of Cultural Events in the greater Philadelphia area is distributed each month. The program seeks to help each participant to fix his sights upon the highest goals his talents and ambitions can discern. Thus far, one thousand boys have attended at least one event.

Accompanied by faculty sponsors or chaperons, the boys have attended tours, operas, concerts, art exhibits, films, and various dramatic productions and have visited colleges and museums throughout our area.

To be sure, recruiting boys, for whom these events are completely "square," is no routine matter. Their imaginations have to be prodded, their curiosity aroused, and the promise of Discovery points toward a "Forty-niner" certificate assured. The motto of the program has been: "Gold is where you find it. Discover cultural gold and become an Edison 'Forty-niner.'" Early in March, Wilt Chamberlain, star of the Philadelphia 76'ers basketball team, learned of the program, was impressed, visited the school, and presented his personal plaque to the boy who had earned the largest number of Discovery credits.

Examine the boy's list of events as he enters the second term: *Hamlet,* Odetta, *Sound of Freedom* (Dr. Martin Luther King), *Becket,* Philadelphia Orchestra, *Samson and Delilah,* Philadelphia Ballet, *Carmen,* Philadelphia Chamber Orchestra, *Man and Superman,* NASA, *She Stoops to Conquer,* the Exceptional Film Society, *Antigone,* and *The Misanthrope.*

As teachers working with youth in depressed areas, ours is the responsibility of supporting these young people as they learn to withstand the bitterness of novelty. Dealing with the unexplored—opera, for

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Exposure to cultural experiences and participation in them are controlled largely by the local environment. If the home encourages these pursuits, the battle is half won. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. We may ask, then: What part should the school play? An answer is found in this article, which describes what one school in Philadelphia did to bring enriched experiences to its pupils. True, all of us may not be fortunate enough to live in a city which abounds in cultural offerings. But look around you. The smallest hamlet has something to offer. The author is Coordinator of the Educational Improvement Program, Thomas A. Edison High School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

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example—involves new sounds, new stories, new languages, new settings, and even newer standards of excellence. Most of all, however, attending these events entails meeting the sharper demands of self-discipline. The student's inability to see himself beyond tomorrow, beyond the confines of his present narrow neighborhood, haunts him, maims him.

Preparatory to attending an opera at the Academy of Music, the Edisonites listened to records of popular arias and were given synopsis sheets of the act-by-act story line. Indeed, one boy who had never seen the inside of the "Grand Old Lady of Locust Street" has become a confirmed opera buff, and has not missed a single opportunity to hear a performance. In addition, the boys have applauded the Philadelphia Orchestra concerts, and have attended recitals by William Warfield, McHenry Boatwright, and Marian Anderson. They sat enrapt throughout Handel's *Messiah*. Fifty boys reveled in the "Jazz at the Academy" concert when Dave Brubeck was featured. The artistry of Jose Iturbi at the piano was a source of great satisfaction to them.

In order to qualify for credit for attending any of the Discovery events, the boys are required to fill out an "Assay Journal" sheet, on which they are asked to indicate their reactions to a given experience. It is interesting to note that in many cases the responses have come to be more mature, more sophisticated. The boys are able to tell good performances from bad and are evolving criteria for making judgments.

Living theater replaced the theater of the mind at Edison as enthusiastic groups of ten to 25 boys attended performances at Philadelphia's legitimate theatres. After reading *She Stoops to Conquer* in class, it was intriguing to see Tony Lumpkin spring to life as he was translated to the world of the stage. *Liliom* and *Hedda Gabler* as interpreted by the National Repertory Theatre were equally rewarding; the characters were no longer cardboard stereotypes doomed to the pages of an anthology or textbook, but dynamic people, at once identifiable. *The Misanthrope, Tiger at the Gates, Antigone, The Miser, Man and Superman,* all added to the boys' ability to grasp insights into the human condition,

As coordinator of the Discovery program, I agonized over the possibility of bringing into the school auditorium a program consisting of the highlights of Shakespeare's works. Was this event too sophisticated? Would the audience accept an hour-and-a-half performance in Elizabethan English? Would the boys appreciate all the subtleties and nuances? How much coughing and nervous shifting would there be before we would realize our horrible folly? Surely, this event would prove disastrous. But we had to know. Accordingly, arrangements were made. This show would be the acid test of our mettle as an audience of people who were becoming sensitive to the challenges of drama. Posters, discussion outlines, copies of the program were presented in each English class. Announcements via the public address and the daily bulletin were made. Fact sheets about the cast were prepared and news releases were circulated.

Perhaps Dr. Robert W. Clark, our principal, caught the essence of this event when, after thanking and paying tribute to the company, he turned to the boys and asserted: "Never again will you feel that Shakespeare is a book. As a result of this experience, Shakespeare has become a living and vibrant and significant force in your lives."

To reach the largest number possible, outstanding musical talents were introduced in the assembly program. The boys were unwilling to permit organist Glen Derringer, a top-flight performer who has appeared with many celebrated artists in the world of entertainment, to leave the platform. He, too, obviously enjoyed himself before an exceptionally responsive audience. Quality concerts, not soon to be

forgotten, were also presented by the Young Audiences. Young Audiences is a non-profit organization of civic-minded citizens who arrange concerts in the schools throughout the Philadelphia area. The school was privileged to hear the lilting voice of Gina Carano, who entertained the boys with a repertoire of folk songs from different cultures. Her vibrant and personable qualities as a singer and as a personality completely captivated the faculty and students who attended her concert.

In another absorbing assembly program, Mr. Robert Goldman of the Division of Art Education, School District of Philadelphia, projected 2 x 2 Kodachrome slides in a cleverly arranged program of masterpieces intermingled with art work by Edison students. Mrs. Gwendolyn Hall, art teacher, arranged a series of students' exhibits on the first floor that resulted in the sale of several canvases.

For fully two months, the Discovery Exhibit, consisting of ten panels of photographs of world artists, news releases, and colorful record album jackets, cleverly displayed, was the focus of attention in the school's central corridor near the main entrance. Additional interest and cultural stimulation were generated, and many boys sought answers to questions concerning the identities of the performing personalities. Highlighted also were the publicity pictures taken of the boys attending museums, plays, concerts, libraries, and colleges. In point of fact, enthusiasm became so contagious that the seniors decided to dedicate their yearbook, the *Edisonian,* to the Discovery Program.

Continuous contacts with local schools of higher learning is another promising extension of the Discovery project. LaSalle College, Temple University, and University of Pennsylvania have made the boys welcome guests at almost all of their cultural offerings. Aside from making for a greater degree of articulation between the high school and the college, these frequent visitations have provided additional social opportunities for the boys. Lectures, coffee concerts, jazz festivals, films, student recitals, forums, and debates have brought the Edison student into a climate that he might have thought was completely beyond his ability to appreciate. In a variety of ways this liaison has caused many boys to have second thoughts about the entire subject of higher education.

A Great Books Club involving several boys meets every other Friday to discuss frankly an assigned reading based upon a classic work. The group is led by two prominent attorneys who are devoting their time to this project without receiving any form of compensation. Theirs is the satisfaction of knowing that they have evoked in the young men intelligent examination of many key social, political, and economic issues posed in the course.

An attractive Bookmobile sponsored by a news company in the city, a van stocking well over 6,000 paperback titles, was brought into the school courtyard. English classes visited the "library on wheels" for an entire week, getting to know and to examine "the best that has been thought and said" in the world of letters. The receptivity and positive attitude of the boys will lead to the Bookmobile's return before the end of the year.

The necessity of planning properly, dressing appropriately, and budgeting time and money enters into the boys' participation in Discovery. Each boy must review the Calendar of Events, decide upon those trips he wishes to take, register in the Discovery Office, and save accordingly for transportation and admission (even though tickets have been considerably reduced). One cannot underscore too strongly the feeling Edison boys get in identifying and affiliating with activities that they regard as an important part of their school life.

Finally, the young men seem to realize, increasingly, the hope of the Discovery edifice, implicit in this observation by W.

Somerset Maugham: "We are the heirs of wonderful treasures from the past; treasures of literature and of the arts. They are ours for the asking . . . all our own to have and to enjoy, if only we desire them enough!"

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Making the Most of Our Foreign Students

By F. NEIL WILLIAMS
Huntington (Indiana) College

How can the foreign student attending our high schools and colleges be of greater value to himself, his fellow students, and the community?

The first and most often used means is the all-school assembly or college chapel service which serves as a basis for all students to meet the newcomer and permits a firsthand knowledge of the reflective thinking, reasoning, and ideas of a different country and culture through the eyes of a new friend.

Second, the academic classes of a school lend themselves to a never-ending exchange of thoughts and ideas. Classes such as history, literature, government, language, and science present an excellent opportunity to view more than one socially orientated frame of reference. In such a way all students are exposed to a second text and acquainted with a new perception based upon a foundation quite different from our own.

Third, all international pupils are encouraged to join and be productive participants in a number of student clubs and organizations. Student organizations such as language clubs, vocal groups, athletic teams, and religious organizations may place the foreign student in a role of leadership and respect through special talents and previous learning experiences. However, we should also encourage these pupils to join organizations which will cultivate new interests, talents, and friends. Common goals in student activities can be reached only through the constant efforts and labors of resourceful minds in a united appeal. The results of such action can perhaps be realized only through better world understanding and peace in future generations.

Next, small group discussions and speeches are most beneficial to assist both types of students. The home environment, or resident halls for college students, allows an insight equalled only by a visit to the actual country of the new student. Living patterns, spiritual ideals, and personality insights can be observed in a friendly atmosphere conducive to a common understanding. The American-born student quickly realizes that the entire world does not live in exactly the same cultural pattern as he does, a fact often surprising to the student.

All international students enjoy attending banquets which other students of foreign background attend. This presents the foreign student with the opportunity to talk with other students of foreign birth and many from his own nation. By assigning each new student a native-born student to accompany him, unlimited opportunity to compare ideas, concepts, and impressions of other students is provided.

Combination-type programs or exchange programs with other local high schools and colleges can be of outstanding benefit. A third and fourth culture can be represented through the exchange of international students from neighboring schools. Although this is a much briefer exposure to different cultures, it is still an opportunity to answer many of the questions arising. Through such a program even the smallest school can be exposed to a number of foreign societies.

Community cooperation and support is of vital importance in the total program. Few international students will want to stay in a community in which they are not welcome or one which is not willing to show its friendship and open-minded acceptance. Often these students will be living in the homes of fellow students or interested community residents. Of course, resident hall living is possible on the college level. The importance of the home or living environment cannot be overemphasized in creating community relations.

Vacations and the summer period offer unusual opportunity for our international and our native students. During this time, the students have the opportunity to visit and live with new families in a number of communities.

It is easy to see the value of our exchange program in fostering international understanding and promoting lasting world peace. However, the real key to such values is the means by which these students are handled.